# History of the Church of St. John the Baptist Bristol

H. C. M. HIRST, A.R.I.B.A.

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# HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, BRISTOL

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QUEEN ELIZABETH AT ST. JOHN'S GATE.

(*From the engraving by* R. POCOCK. *Lent by* MRS. PHELPS.)

# History of the Church of St. John the Baptist Bristol

CONTAINING

Notes on The Gateway, The Conduit, Rectory House, Almshouses, Churchyard, etc.

BY

H. C. M. HIRST, A.R.I.B.A.

*Churchwarden 1899–1901*

BRISTOL

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# St. John the Baptist Church, Bristol.

THE Church of St. John the Baptist is the smallest of all the ancient Bristol churches which now remain; it is, however, by no means the least interesting, its position at once attracts attention and renders it now unique, standing as it does upon, or rather forming a part of, the ancient city wall, with its Tower standing over the old city gate. The Crypt also is a feature of special interest; it is of the same dimensions as the Church itself, and has a separate entrance, and is associated especially with the ancient guild services. The church archives date back to a very early period, the names of Churchwardens as early as A.D. 1310 being on record, and there is extant also a copy of the Rent Roll of the church properties in A.D. 1419.

From the fourteenth century onwards the Church, and the men connected with it, many of whom lived under the shadow of its Tower and within sound of its bells, played no inconsiderable part in the civic life of the city. In old Bristol wills, in the old Churchwardens' books, and ancient documents and deeds belonging to the Church, which are referred to later in these pages, and in the old list of Mayors and Sheriffs of the city, the names of men connected with St. John's are constantly mentioned as holding high official positions in Bristol.

A few instances of this may here be cited, further details of which will be found in later pages.

Among the founders of the Guild or Brotherhood of the Holy Cross which was established in connection with

the Church, and held its services in the Crypt, appear the names of William Spencer, Mayor A.D. 1465, 1473 and 1478; Thomas Rowley, Sheriff 1475 (commemorated by a brass in the Chancel); Robert Strange, Mayor 1482; William Wodington, Mayor 1480; John Bagod, Mayor 1476; William Spencer and John Bagod were M.P.'s for Bristol in A.D. 1466.

At a later period, in A.D. 1626, we find that the Mayor, Christopher Whitson, and the two Sheriffs, John Lock and Walter Ellis, were all Vestrymen of St. John's; again some twenty years later, in the time of the Civil War, we find that two Vestrymen of St. John's, John Tailor and George Bowcher, laid down their lives in the Royal cause. The Historical Notes which appear later in these pages afford many other instances of the part which St. John's men took in civic life.

## THE ARCHWAY.

The Archway under the Tower is the last remaining of the old Bristol city gates, and is associated with many interesting incidents of the early history of Bristol. The groove of the old portcullis still remains, but the ancient iron hooks to which the hinges of the gates of a later date were attached indicate probably heavy wooden gates. In the Churchwardens' Accounts for A.D. 1535 we find the entry: "Item for paynting the Gate against the King's coming 12s."; this was for the expected visit of Henry VIII.

Primitive methods of lighting prevailed in those days, and the Churchwardens took upon themselves the duty of lighting the gateway, underneath which was situated the west door of the Church; for an annual charge is to be found in the Churchwardens' Accounts for "candles for the Lanthorn in the Gateway."

Henry VIII. appears to have made no public entry into Bristol, although there was a lively expectation of his coming accompanied by Anne Boleyn in the year 1535.

Early chronicles relate an earlier visit of the sovereign, viz. Henry VII., in A.D. 1486 as follows:—

"From thence the King proceeded ad portam sancti Johannis where was another pageant of many maiden children riched beseme with girdles, beads and onches, where Justitia had the words which follow:—

"'Welcome, most excellent high and victorious
Welcome, delicate rose of this your Brittain.'"

(Seyer.)

Queen Elizabeth in August, 1574, made a progress through the city of Bristol:—

"The Mayor Mr. Thomas Kelke and all the Common Council riding in scarlet upon good steeds, with their

footcloths and pages by their side, with the companies and many citizens" met Her Majesty at Lawford's Gate. (Seyer.)

The Recorder, Mr. John Popham, made an oration and "delivered a fair needlework purse wrought with silk and gold unto her Highness with one hundred pounds in gold therein. The procession passed through the city and halted at the High Cross and at St. John's Gate, where orations were delivered." (Seyer.) Her Majesty remained at Mr. John Young's house on St. Augustine's Back for seven days.

The appearance of St. John's Gateway prior to the year 1580 must have been extremely picturesque, for it was flanked on the eastern side by St. John's Church and on the western side by St. Lawrence Church. The Tower and Spire of St. John's, standing over the Archway and between the two churches, gave a unique appearance to the old gateway. Leland, who wrote his celebrated *Itinerary* about A.D. 1545, thus speaks of it: "St. John's Gate, a churche of eche syde of it St. John's Churche—it is hard on the North syde of it, and there be Cryptae."

Hoefnagle's map dated A.D. 1581 shows St. Lawrence Church.

In the time of Charles I. and the Civil War Bristol underwent two sieges, and St. John's Gate was a defensive point, although no longer in the outer circuit of the city walls, which prior to that date had been extended, and Froom Gate had become the outer gate on that side.

In A.D. 1643 Prince Rupert was advancing on Bristol for the purpose of occupying it on behalf of the King. In this city as in so many others parties were divided into Royalists and Parliamentarians. The Royalists formed a party to assist Prince Rupert, George Bowcher and Yeamans being its leaders. It is an interesting fact that George Bowcher was a member of the Vestry of St. John, and his signature is to be seen in the Vestry

books of A.D. 1630–33. Bowcher lived in Christmas Street near the Froom and not far from St. John's Gate. His house, of which there is a sketch in Prout's *Antiquities of Bristol* and another sketch among the Braikenridge papers, appears to have been on the west side of the street and close to the Froom, and some part of the house overhung the river on brackets. The house was not pulled down until 1821, and Braikenridge says he saw it and had a sketch made just before it was removed. The house was a meeting-place for the Royalist party. Bowcher prepared the Crypt of St. John's Church to be used as a prison for "captured Roundheads." Froom Gate was to be captured for the Royalists; Prince Rupert, who was to station himself on the hill at Cotham, was to be informed when it had been captured by the ringing of the bells of St. Michael's and St. John's Churches, and was then to enter the city by Froom Gate and St. John's Gate. But the scheme failed and Prince Rupert drew off from the city. The tragedy which followed is well known in the history of the times. Parliament ordered a council of war to be constituted to try Bowcher and Yeamans as the leaders and instigators of what was styled "the plot." Party feeling ran high, and in spite of King Charles' efforts to save them, they were executed on the 30th May, 1643. It is on record that Bowcher in his examination stated that he had provided chains and locks "to bar the passage at St. John's Gate so as to prevent the Parliament forces from rushing in."

Another prominent figure at this date and an ardent Royalist was Alderman John Tailor. He was Churchwarden of St. John's in 1634, and in 1640 became Mayor of Bristol. His residence was in Broad Street, at a house described as being opposite the *Mercury* Office, which was pulled down in 1776. A writer in the year 1850 states that he had been informed by the City Chamberlain that this house was the one occupied by a firm of wine merchants, which would identify it with the house now

No. 29 Broad Street. A MS. in the Jefferies Collection throws an interesting light on this subject. Jefferies transcribes an old MS. which he discovered, which was written about the time of the events which it relates and the authenticity of which there is no reason to doubt. This MS. states that on August 3rd, 1642, King Charles came to Bristol accompanied by Prince Charles and the Duke of York, and that accompanied by Prince Rupert he made an inspection of the forts on the hill, and then came down St. Michael's Hill, and there alighted and came on foot to Froom Gate, and so went up (necessarily through St. John's Gate) to Alderman John Tailor's house in Broad Street, where he dined with Prince Rupert and other of the nobles, and after dinner His Majesty did ride to Redcliffe. Another part of the MS. states, as is well known, that the King and his suite lodged at the houses of Alderman Creswicke and Alderman Holworthy in Small Street.

In the siege of 1645, when Fairfax was besieging the city, John Tailor, acting as Colonel of the Auxiliaries, fell fighting. He was buried in the Crypt of St. John's, and the entry in the burial register records under date 13th Sept., 1645, John Tailor, "one of the Aldermen and Choxonell of the Auxiliary."

The next date on which the chronicles refer to St. John's Gate is on the accession of Queen Anne on 12th March, 1702. The Queen was proclaimed with much ceremony in Bristol, and "all the conduits and gates and Church porches were adorned with flowers and guilded branches, particularly St. Stephen's Porch and St. John's Gate which was curiously adorned with flowers and branches of guilded laurel on both sides, also over the middle of the Arch, on both sides the Gate, were set a crown of Mitres; and underneath each crown hung a tablet with an inscription, that facing Broad Street being 'Deus Regina ecclesia' and that facing Christmas Street 'Dux foemina facti.'" (Seyer.)

Two sketches by O'Neil in the Braikenridge Collection dated 1820 and 1821 indicate that at some period subsequent to the year 1580 a small arch, somewhat rude in character, was constructed for the use of foot passengers on the west side of the gateway passing underneath buildings of a commercial character, which had been erected upon the site of St. Lawrence Church; this small arch remained until the year 1828, when the two side archways for foot passengers which now exist were constructed, and the old Conduit House removed.

# THE CHURCH.

## DEDICATION AND FOUNDER.

The earliest mention of the Church appears in a deed dated A.D. 1174, which recites that William Earl of Gloucester gives to the Priory of St. James and the Monastery of Tewkesbury "the Church of St. John which was his fee."

The date of the earliest Rector, William Beind, as given by Barrett is A.D. 1285. In the "Pleas of the Crown" for A.D. 1287 we find that one Maurice de Ingelbury "placed himself in the Church of St. John de Bradforde in Bristol and owned himself a robber." At first sight this would appear to have no connection with St. John the Baptist. No "St. John de Bradforde" is known in history, and the late Rev. E. A. Fuller in an article on the "Pleas of the Crown" remarks that no Church of "St. John de Bradforde" is known in Bristol. The writer's surmise is that in reality the Church was then called St. John "de bradforde" or "of the broad ford," *i.e.* of the broad ford of the Froom. The River Froom ran near the Church, and there was probably a ford in the position occupied in later years by Froom Gate, distant about eighty yards from the Church (124 gressus, as William Worcester informs us).

Broad Street in old documents is called "Bradstrete," *e.g.* in the will of Walter Frompton (Frampton) the founder of the Church, dated A.D. 1388, there is mentioned "a tenement in Bradstrete." This tends to confirm the correctness of the theory, and thereby adds an additional element of interest in the history of the Church.

The dedication to St. John the Baptist is generally accepted by all Bristol historians. It is interesting to find that this same idea of proximity to a ford of the Froom

may have influenced this dedication. The Rev. C. S. Taylor, who has closely studied the history and dedication of many of the ancient Bristol churches, in writing on dedications makes the surmise that as St. John the Baptist preached at the fords of the Jordan so the proximity of this Church to the ford of the Froom suggested the name of the dedication.

It is curious to find that a twin dedication is mentioned at certain periods of the Church's history. In two of the MSS. preserved in the Church, the earlier one dated A.D. 1392 and the later A.D. 1546, the Church is referred to as "St. John Baptist and John Evangelist."

In attempting to arrive at the date at which the Church was built considerable difficulties are encountered. The actual dates obtainable from ancient documents are comparative only, and have to be considered in conjunction with the style of the work. An examination of the whole Church and of the Crypt leads to the conclusion that the eastern half of the Crypt is earlier in date than any other part. The groining of the roof in that part springs from columns with capitals which have the appearance of work of the Decorated period, the carving of the bosses at the intersections of the groining ribs is bold in character, and one or more of the window lights have pointed heads. These indications would be consistent with the date of about A.D. 1300 or a little later. Passing to the west half of the Crypt, it is noticeable that the groining ribs are carried down to the floor without the intervening column and capital as in the eastern half; the windows also have four centred arches to the openings, and appear rather later in date. This part of the Crypt corresponds in style with the Church itself. The tracery of the church windows as a whole is very plain in character, and therefore not as indicative of date as would have been the case if the tracery had been richer.

In the will of Joanna Baker, dated 18th May, A.D. 1392,

she directs that she is to be buried in the "Crowd of St. John's Bristol." John Brooke, whose will is dated 15th February, A.D. 1395, left legacies to the Rector and fabric of St. John. This is proof of the existence of the Crypt at that date, and in all probability refers to the earlier or eastern part. Further evidence of date is afforded by a deed among the Church MSS.: it is dated 3rd November, 1400, and is a grant from John Knyghton Chaplain, "Parson of Wraxale," to John Tony, Parson of St. John, allocating money to the "sustentation of the fabric and lights of the Church." The fabric referred to may have been the east part of Crypt and Church over it, which was in process of rebuilding. The conclusion to be arrived at is that the date of the Church and of the western half of the Crypt is about A.D. 1400.

There must evidently have been an earlier Church on the same site, for the three earliest references to the Church previously quoted are A.D. 1174, A.D. 1285 (first Rector) and A.D. 1287, and these dates are prior to the earliest date which can in any probability be assigned to the east part of the existing Crypt.

Historians of Bristol churches naturally look to William Worcester for reliable evidence about the ecclesiastical buildings of Bristol. He was a native of Bristol, born in A.D. 1415, and although he did not live in Bristol in his middle age, he returned there in his later years, and occupied himself in writing his celebrated *Itinerary* in or about A.D. 1470–80, and he died about A.D. 1484. With regard to St. John's Church he gives us most valuable and interesting information, but unfortunately his description of the Church is not at all clear, and therefore does not assist as much as might have been expected in fixing dates. He tells us that the Church of St. John the Baptist, together with the arched Crypt and the Chapel of the "Holy Cross," in which Church the famous burgher merchant ("Famosus mercator burgensis") lies buried, was built anew at the

same time as the beautiful gateway with a Tower and high spire of freestone (" Fecit de novo fundari et construi tam ecclesiam quam portam pulcram cum turri cum alta spera de frestone ") ; and in another place, speaking of the Archway, he tells us that it was built anew, together with the Church of St. John, by Walter Frampton, a noble merchant of the town of Bristol (" De novo aedificata fuit cum ecclesia Sancti Johannis per Walterum Frampton nobilem mercatorem villae Bristoll "). We have here very definite information by a writer who must have been well acquainted with the Church and its history, for probably it had not been completed more than fifty or sixty years at the time he was writing. It seems very probable that Walter Frampton in his lifetime took the chief share in the building of the Church, and that after his death his son and successors would care for its completion in his memory, and this may to some extent account for the style having the appearance of a somewhat later date than Walter Frampton's own lifetime.

When we come to examine William Worcester's description of the Church we are in some difficulty, for he does not describe at all the existing Church but appears to be describing the Crypt. He informs us that it has six arches and six windows on one side towards the north and two windows towards the south " frette vowted." Now this description corresponds with the Crypt. Further confirmation that he is speaking of the Crypt is given by the fact that the measurements which he gives elsewhere of the length, width, and height closely correspond with the measurements of the present Crypt. Possibly he intended to give a further description of the Church above the Crypt and omitted to do so, or possibly his notes, which are supposed to have been written in the first instance in a rough diary form, may have been lost.

The words " frette vowted " in this case refer to the windows, it is an expression used by ancient writers on

architecture to denote what would now be called "cusping," and six of the windows in the Crypt are cusped.

William Worcester gives the length of the Church as 62 feet and the width as 24 feet, and these measurements agree with those of the present Church exclusive of the Chancel; he also states that the dedication was on 17th July, but most unfortunately omits to give the year.

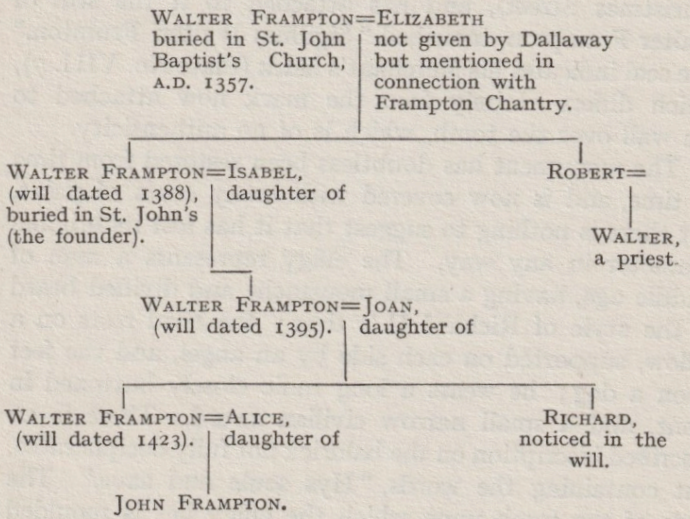
Further evidence of date is afforded by a deed referring to the land upon which part of the Chancel stands, dated 15th April, A.D. 1394. This deed is endorsed "by the yere of ye hey awter of Seynt John," showing that the Chancel must have been built shortly after the date of the deed.

Walter Frampton is justly regarded as the founder, for as will be seen it was by him that the present fabric was erected, and rebuilt upon the foundations and walls of an earlier church. The earlier portion of the Crypt was probably the only part of the original structure not rebuilt. It is a fortunate circumstance that the founder's tomb still remains in good preservation; it is an altar tomb (Plate II.) with a recumbent effigy, which has been fully described by Miss Roper, and is also illustrated in the *Proceedings of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society* (1893). William Worcester states that this "noble merchant of the City of Bristol is buried in a raised Tomb in the Church over the Crypt." The tomb formerly stood near the centre of the Church, but now stands underneath a canopied recess in the north wall of the Chancel. The inscription on the tomb is: "Hic Jacet Gualterus Frampton Hujus Ecclesiae Fundator qui Obiit Ano Dni MCCCLXXXVIII."

Walter Frampton (sometimes spelt Frompton) was a prominent man in his time, and was Mayor of Bristol in A.D. 1357, A.D. 1366 and A.D. 1374. It is interesting to surmise that he must have been acquainted

with William Canynge the elder, who was Mayor in A.D. 1373 and A.D. 1375, and who is known in connection with the earlier work at St. Mary Redcliffe Church. A feature in the design of St. John's Church, referred to later, has its counterpart in the early design of St. Mary Redcliffe and of St. Thomas's Church. This circumstance suggests that the building of St. John's Church and Redcliffe Church were in progress during the same era, and that the builders may have compared notes.

The pedigree of the Frampton family as given in Dallaway is as follows :—


WALTER FRAMPTON=ELIZABETH
buried in St. John Baptist's Church, A.D. 1357.
not given by Dallaway but mentioned in connection with Frampton Chantry.
WALTER FRAMPTON=ISABEL,
(will dated 1388), daughter of
buried in St. John's (the founder).
ROBERT=
WALTER, a priest.
WALTER FRAMPTON=JOAN,
(will dated 1395). daughter of
WALTER FRAMPTON=ALICE,
(will dated 1423). daughter of
JOHN FRAMPTON.
RICHARD, noticed in the will.

It shows there were four members of the Frampton family all bearing the name of Walter recorded in Bristol history. The first Walter died in 1357, and is reputed to have been buried in the Church of St. John, and it is quite possible that this may refer to the earlier portion of the Crypt.

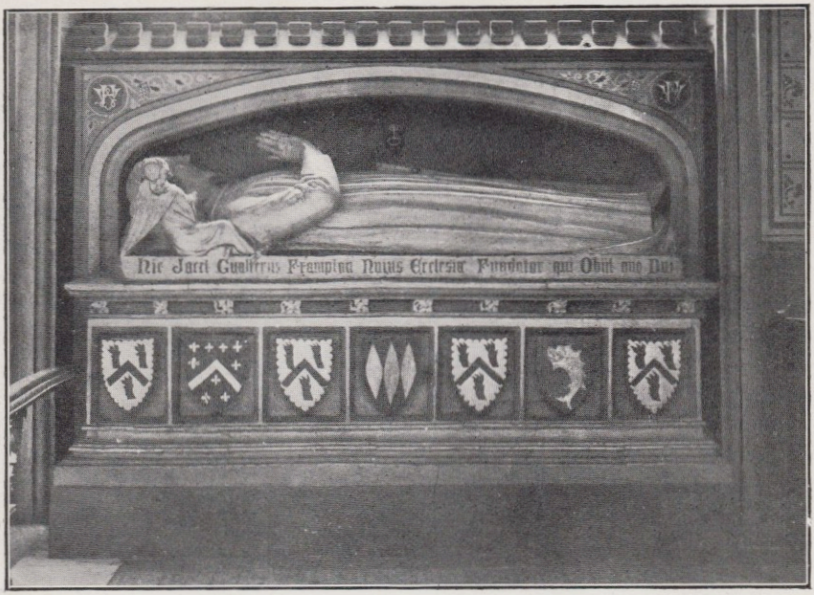
In this year (1357) the founder was first Mayor. It may easily be imagined that the first Walter left money for the rebuilding of the Church, and his son carried on

the great work in memory of his father. A copy of the will of the founder dated A.D. 1388 is preserved in the "Great Orphan Book" at the Bristol Council House, and has been translated and published by Wadley; it leaves directions that he is to be buried in the Parish Church of St. John of Bristol, also "two chaplains to celebrate for ten years in the Church of Frompton for testator's soul and his benefactors." A MS. of the Church dated 18th October, A.D. 1383, is a grant from Walter Frompton, burgess, to John Swell, co-burgess, of a rose paid yearly as rent for a tenement in Knyfsmithstrete (Christmas Street), and has attached to it the seal of Walter Frampton, inscribed "Sigillum Walteri Frumton." The seal indicates his Merchant's Mark (Plate No. VIII. 7), which differs entirely from the mark now attached to the wall over the tomb, which is of no authenticity.

The monument has doubtless been restored from time to time, and is now covered with many coats of paint, but there is nothing to suggest that it has lost its original character in any way. The effigy represents a man of middle age, having a small moustache and divided beard of the style of Richard II.'s time; the head rests on a pillow, supported on each side by an angel, and the feet upon a dog; he wears a long tunic closely buttoned in front, and a small narrow civilian sword. There is an inscribed inscription on the baldrick not fully decipherable, but containing the words, "Hys soule and save." The base of the tomb upon which the effigy lies is moulded and carved, and contains seven panels each having shields with coats of arms. The 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th shields have "Argent a chevron between three lions gambs erect erased within bordure engrailed gules," FRAMPTON. 2nd shield, "Gules a chevron between nine crosses botonny." 4th shield, "Sable three fusils in fess conjoined or." 6th shield, "Sable, a dolphin hauriant or." The coats of arms on the shields Nos. 2, 4, and 6 are unknown.

The Walter Frampton whose will is dated 1395 was

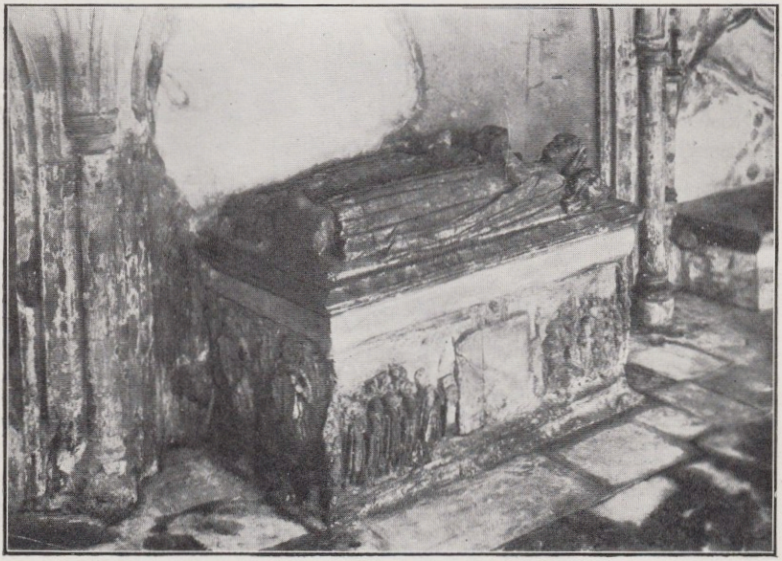
PLATE II.




TOMB OF WALTER FRAMPTON (THE FOUNDER) IN CHANCEL.

(*Photo by* HORTON).

PLATE III.



TOMB IN CRYPT, SOUTH-EAST WALL.

(*Photo by* T. F. HOBBS).

the son of the founder, and he also left directions to be buried in the Church of St. John.

## PLAN AND DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH.

The plan of the Church was dictated obviously by its position on the city wall. It consists of a long and narrow Nave without Transepts and a Chancel somewhat narrower in width; at the west end the Tower with the Archway underneath. At the present time there is a West Gallery, underneath which is the entrance, having the doorway on the south side, but this arrangement is of comparatively recent date. The Conduit House, which is referred to elsewhere, formerly stood at this point and remained until the year 1828. This is shown in a sketch in the Braikenridge Collection.

The original entrance to the Church was in the west wall underneath the Archway, and the door arch is still visible in the wall.

As the east wall adjoined other buildings and the west wall adjoined the Tower, there is no window either at the east or west end. Beyond the east wall stands the vestry, but history indicates that it was formed by the construction of a new east wall of the Church, and that formerly the High Altar stood on the site of the Vestry.

The Crypt is the same length as the Church, but does not extend underneath the Vestry; it may therefore be inferred that the east end of the Chancel was an extension beyond the original east wall of an older church, and it appears to have been built upon land belonging to the Corporation of Bristol. Among the MSS. is a deed which refers to the matter, it is dated 15th April, A.D. 1395, and recites that John Tony, Rector of St. John's, and Thomas-atte-Mede and John Brown, proctors of the Church, in recompense for the gift of a piece of land, the site of the Chancel of the Church, agree to pay to the Mayor and Commonalty of Bristol twelve pence yearly.

A somewhat unusual feature in the roof of the nave is of considerable interest. This has the appearance as seen from the outside of a transept and as seen from the inside of a lantern. It would appear as if the original designer felt that the nave was unduly long in proportion to its width, and he desired to break up the length by introducing this feature. Whether a central lantern tower was ever contemplated seems doubtful.

The Rev. C. S. Taylor has called the writer's attention to the fact that both at Redcliffe Church and at St. Thomas's Church a central Tower or Lantern formed a part of the original designs of those churches. Barrett records that St. Thomas's Church had such a Lantern and in the Vestry Books there is a charge for repairing it. The Rev. Archdeacon Norris in his account of the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe (1888) gives full details of the small tower which was intended at Redcliffe in front of the entrance to the choir, and quotes William Worcester who confirms this.

It is interesting to remember that St. John's Church was probably in course of erection at a date not very distant from that of the Redcliffe and St. Thomas work referred to, and the designer may have taken the idea from those churches.

Prior to the Reformation the arrangement of the interior of the Church was very different to the present arrangement.

There was the High Altar, and frequent reference to the same appear in the early Vestry Books; and beside the High Altar there were "two tables of alabaster, one to Our Lady and one to St. Michael Altar, the which William Wodynton gave." There was also a Rood Loft, which appears to have been of an elaborate character with many carved figures, for items in the account appear as follows: "Paid unto old Solbe for paynting of our Rood Lofte and mending the images £3 os. od." "Paid unto

the said old Solbe for paynting of the nether Rood Lofte and more with the two small images and the 12 apostles with the angels, £2 13s. 4d."

At the time of the Reformation great changes took place. In 1561 the Rood Loft was removed, and in 1570 appears the first reference to the Vestry, and it is probable that the existing east wall separating the Church from the Vestry was erected at that date.

About fifty years later, viz. in A.D. 1627, we find in the accounts of Peter Goode Churchwarden, "This yere the Chauncell was new builded." The cost of the same amounted to £50, but there is no evidence to what extent this rebuilding was carried.

In the year 1621, William Jones being Churchwarden, is an entry showing that new pews were then constructed throughout the Church ; these are evidently the pews now in the Church, although they may have been altered from time to time.

In the year 1716 Jeremy Innys was Churchwarden, and the accounts show that very considerable restoration took place. The roof was to a great extent reconstructed, other repairs carried out, and the inside of the Church repainted.

The woodwork of the West Gallery is seventeenth century in character, but appears to have been altered and made up with new work from time to time.

The paintings in the upper panels are considered to be by a Dutch artist. The subjects are as follows :—

St. Peter (Cross-keys). St. Matthew (Man). St. John the Baptist. St. Mark (Lion). St. John (Eagle).

St. Luke (Calf). St. Paul (Sword). ("I have fought the fight").

In the year 1828, when the new West Archway was constructed, considerable alterations were made at the west end, and the existing entrance lobby and entrance door were formed.

The Altar Rail, which is now placed in the Crypt, was probably erected in the Chancel in the middle of the seventeenth century; there are very similar rails in St. Peter's Church and in St. Mary-le-port Church.

The Lectern and Reading Desk are of seventeenth-century type, similar in character to the West Screen, but they appear to have been re-constructed.

The appearance of the interior of the Church in the year 1826 is indicated by a sketch by Rowbotham in the Braikenridge Collection. It shows a Pulpit standing in the centre underneath the Chancel Arch with a Screen and a Lectern and Reading Desk on either side. A Reredos of very "rococo" character appears at the east end. This arrangement evidently remained at least up to the year A.D. 1843, for in that year the author of the *Churches of Bristol* refers to the position of the Pulpit and Reading Desk under the Chancel Arch, and remarks that they obstruct the view of the east end and give the whole Church a "confused appearance."

Not many years after the last-mentioned date, and during the period when the Rev. Canon Barrow was Rector (1834–55), extensive alterations and repairs were undertaken, and apparently the Pulpit and Reading Desk removed from their position under the Chancel Arch, and the general arrangement of the east part of the Church was altered approximately to its present state.

In the year 1883 the West Gallery was moved back one bay westward and new stairs constructed leading to it.

Tyson the antiquarian, writing in 1828 at the time when the new Western Archway under the Tower was constructed, states that he discovered on the interior west wall of the Church the remains of an interesting

painting which had to a considerable extent perished, but he was able to identify the subject as a representation of "The Doom."

The present decoration of the interior appears to have been carried out in 1870; it is of the debased character much in vogue in the middle of the nineteenth century, and detracts greatly from the appearance of the Church; it urgently calls for restoration in a form more in keeping with the ancient character of the Church.

### THE OLD ORGAN.

In A.D. 1625 appears an entry that "The organde was made and putt up in ye Church which cost the some of fifty pounds." The existing organ was erected in the year 1883.

### THE FONT.

In the year A.D. 1624, George Bowcher being Churchwarden, the following entry appears in the accounts: "This yeare the new dowr in St. Johns Lane going into ye Church and the new Fonte was made with other good work about the Church amounting to ye some of Forty pounds."

### COMMUNION TABLE.

In the year 1635 appears the entry: "Pd for a new Communion Table and Painting and guilding £3 14s. 0d." This evidently refers to the Table now in the Chancel.

### THE HOUR-GLASS.

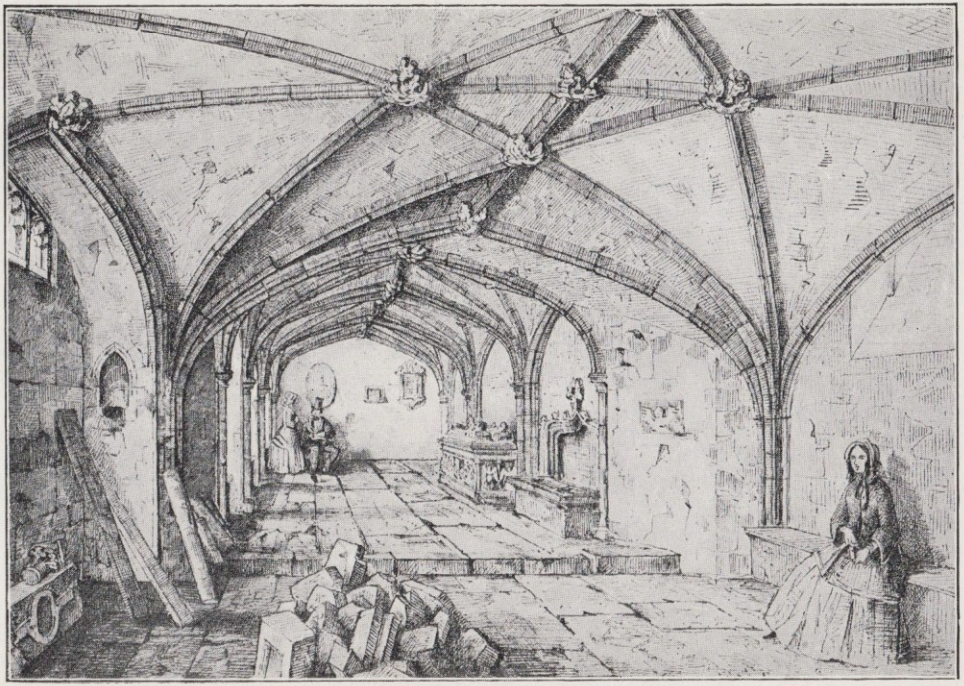
The Hour-Glass which is fixed near the pulpit is of great interest. Few glasses of this character are now to be found, but there is one in existence at St. Alban's Church, Wood Street, London. They were in use during the Commonwealth period to set a limit to the length of the sermons.

## THE CRYPT.

(Plate IV.)

The date of the Crypt has already been referred to. It is of the same dimensions as the Church above. It is not an underground structure as the term frequently implies, but might almost be described as a lower Church. William Worcester calls it the "Chapel (Capella) of the Holy Cross."

Formerly it was well lighted by its six windows on the north side, one of which was blocked up in later years. It is evident that the road on this north side, now known as Nelson Street, but formerly called Grope Lane and later Hallier's Lane, has been raised, and the six windows have been shortened to accommodate them to the new level of the street, which now stands some 2 feet above the floor of the Crypt. St. John's Lane, which adjoins on the south side, also appears to have been raised in level, and the two windows on that side also reduced in height. The Crypt is entered by a small doorway in the centre of the north side. Originally there was an entrance in the south-west corner from the Church above, and the Stoup now in that position doubtless adjoined the doorway. There is now no trace of this entrance, but among the Jefferies MSS. is a communication from Tyson, the Bristol antiquarian, who in the year 1828, when the new archway on the east side of the gate was in course of construction, noted the evidences of this old entrance. The eastern end, corresponding with the Chancel above, is narrower than the west part. The roof of both parts is groined, the vaulting having bold ribs and boldly carved bosses at the intersections. In the east end these groined ribs spring from the caps of columns, as has already been mentioned, whereas in the western



VIEW OF CRYPT LOOKING EAST.

(*Drawn by* J. H. HIRST, 1850.)

part the ribs are carried down to the floor. The greater width of the western part necessarily alters the plan of the groining, but it appears as if the builders intended to carry out and imitate the general character of the work at the eastern end and thus harmonise the whole. Between the two groins is a plain space without ribs. The eastern end is now raised one step above the western end, but was probably not so originally. At the present time there is a low screen in this position, with central gates dividing the two parts, but this screen is the old Altar Rail removed from the Chancel of the Church.

In a sketch in Prout's *Antiquities of Bristol*, and also in a sketch by W. Müller, a screen with arches, and central gates, apparently some 6 feet in height, is shown standing in this position dividing the two parts of the Crypt, but the style appears to be seventeenth century in character, and therefore of much later date than the Crypt itself. This screen has entirely disappeared. At the entrance door is a Stoup for holy water which is probably in its original position.

There are an unusual number of monuments, mural tablets and incised memorial slabs, which are more particularly referred to under heading of "Monuments in the Crypt." It is evident that this Crypt was a much desired place of burial, for among old Bristol wills the instances are very numerous in which citizens of distinction in their time left directions to be buried in the "Crowd of St. John's."

The Crypt was dedicated to the Holy Cross from the Guild of that name which was there instituted and held its services. In the oldest Churchwardens' Book preserved in the Church we find the record of the institution of a church guild as follows: "In the yeare of our Lord God 1465 in worship of the Holy Rood, St. John Baptist and St. Martin Confessor." "Master Thomas Clynt" was the "parson" of the Church at the time, and the names of the founders mentioned on page 8 follow. A priest was

devoutly to say Mass every day in the "Crowd" for the prosperity and welfare of all the "Brittheren and Sisteren" of the fellowship both living and dead: from All Hallowen tide to Candlemas the Mass was to begin at seven in the morning, and from Candlemas to All Hallowen at six.

It would appear that certain properties were definitely allocated to the services of the Crypt. Evidence of this fact is found in the old Churchwardens' Book in which is a list "of the lands and tenements belonging to the Crowde of the said Church of St. John Baptiste for the sustentation of a priest to pray for all the Britheren and Sisteren and Benefactors of the same place." Among the tenements there mentioned is one in St. John's Lane, the gift of William Spencer, merchant, of Bristol, also five tenements in St. Bartholomew's Alley, the gift of Henry Chester and Thomas Rowley.

Tyson the antiquarian, who made notes on the Church in A.D. 1828, states that the eastern end of the groining of the Crypt was ornamented by a fresco painting, traces of which were then visible; he also noted evidence of the existence of a Piscina on the north side of the eastern wall, which he considered denoted that there was once an altar at the east end. As has been mentioned, there was at one time a screen dividing the east from the west part of the Crypt. Again, in the will of Thomas Harte, A.D. 1541, is found a legacy for restoring "the pews" in the Crypt. These evidences seem to indicate that the Crypt was at one time arranged for services in the manner of a church, the east end being the Chancel for the officiating priest, and the western part fitted with pews for the congregation.

Two old Bristol wills may here be quoted, as they refer particularly to the Crypt. The first mentioned has an additional interest, inasmuch as Hugh Plomer was a Churchwarden of St. John's in A.D. 1392, and among the Church MSS. is a deed with his seal in the form of a

Merchant's Mark (Plate VIII., 8). The second is that of the above-mentioned Thomas Harte.

Hugh Plomer. Will dated 26th July, 1400. "To be buried in the Crypt of the Parish Church of St. John of Bristol in which Crypt a fit Chaplain is to celebrate for a whole year for testator's soul and the souls of all the faithful departed. To the fabric of that Church XX. shillings."

Thomas Harte, merchant. Will dated 29th March, A.D. 1541. "To be buried in St. Jones Crowdes at Bristowe, towards the reparation of the said Crowdes where the People doo walke to make the grounde playne and to repaire the Pews there XX.s. sterling. To Mr. Parson of St. Jones my Curate for tithes XXVI.s. VIIId. To Mr. Thomas White Alderman of Bristowe two Portag."

*Note.*—A Portag was a Portuguese gold coin worth about £3 10s. 0d.

## MONUMENTS IN THE CHURCH.

### ANDREW INNYS MONUMENT.

This is a well-designed mural monument by the sculptor Rysbrach, who executed the statue of William III. in Queen Square and also the figure of Edward Colston in the Colston monument in All Saints' Church.

Andrew Innys and many members of his family are buried in the Crypt. His personality is interesting in several respects. He was the grandson of Sir Robert Innys, who married Lady Grisel Stuart, the daughter of James, Earl of Murray. Andrew Innys had one son by his first wife and eight sons and six daughters by his second wife, who was the daughter of Jeremy Martin, one of the Feoffees of St. John's Church and Lord of the Manor of Redland, who lived at Redland Court prior to its rebuilding by ~~William~~ JOHN Cossins, and was buried in St. John's Churchyard. Of the fifteen children of Andrew Innys many subsequently became prominent in Bristol. His daughter Elizabeth married Slade Baker, and his granddaughter by that marriage married George Daubeny, M.P. for Bristol 1781; his daughter Martha married John Cossins, the rebuilder of Redland Court and the founder and builder of Redland Chapel; his son Jeremy Innys was a member of the Society of Merchant Venturers, and Churchwarden of St. John's in A.D. 1716.

The coats of arms on the shields on the monument (Plate VIII., 1, 2, 3) are :—

1. "3 estoiles of 5 points, a crescent for a difference" (INNYS), impaling "3 bars nebulé" (LOVELL).

2. Innys as 1, impaling "Arg. 2 bars gules" (MARTIN).

3. Martin as 2, impaling "Per fess azure and gules a cross or" (LORT). Jeremy Martin married Elizabeth Lort, of Stackpole Court, County of Pembroke.

## ROWLEY BRASS.

This memorial brass is of considerable interest. Its original position was on the floor of the Chancel, but it is now placed on the south wall of the Chancel. It commemorates Thomas Rowley, merchant and burgess, who died 23rd January, A.D. 1478, and his wife, who died A.D. 1470. The figures are boldly delineated in the costumes of the period. Out of the mouth of the man issues a scroll with the inscription, "Santa Maria ora pro nobis"; out of the mouth of the woman, "Santa Trinitas unus Deus miserere nobis." There is also a crest of a stag or roe, probably a rebus or pun upon the name Rowley. A Merchant's Mark (Plate VIII., 6) is also engraved combining the letters "T. R."

Thomas Rowley was Bailiff in A.D. 1466 (in this year William Canynge was Mayor), and Sheriff in A.D. 1475–76. He was a Vestryman of St. John's, and in the earliest Vestry Book we find his name mentioned as follows: "Hereafter followeth certain actes made the 7th day of March 1472, by all the parishe, William Howell, Robert Strannge, William Wodyngton, Thomas Rowley and other honest men present." He was also one of the founders of the Guild of the Holy Cross in the "Crowde." There appears to be no ground for connecting this brass with the tomb in the Crypt on which are the recumbent effigies of a man and a woman, which has been on untenable evidence attributed to the Rowley family.

## MONUMENTS IN THE CRYPT.

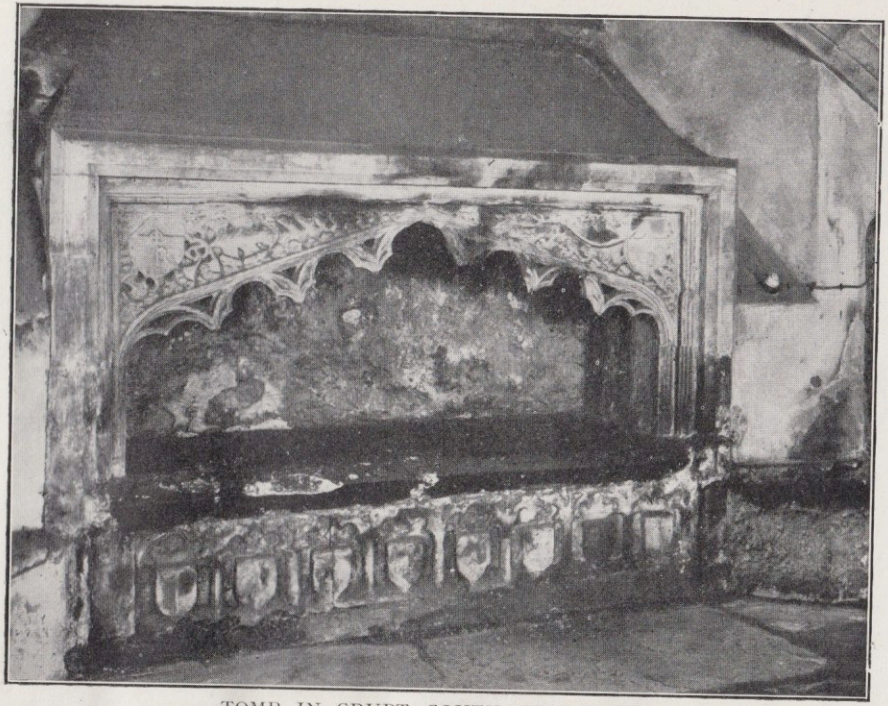
### ALTAR TOMB ON THE SOUTH-WEST WALL.

(Plate V.)

This tomb is one of the most interesting as well as the earliest in date, and appears to be of the same date as the Church itself; it stands in a recess beneath an arched canopy on the south wall at the west end; the character of the arch is late Decorated or Early Perpendicular; the spandrels are filled in with carved foliage and a Merchant's Mark on each shield; the lower part of the front has ornamental tracery and panels with shields, but without coats of arms.

On the alabaster slab (Plate VI.) which covers the tomb beneath the recess are the incised figures of a man with a woman on each side of him; the man is dressed as a merchant, and the two women, representing his two wives, are dressed alike. Beneath these three principal figures are the small figures of eight children, and below this is a panel with an inscription which from age and decay is greatly defaced and partly illegible; the Merchant's Mark is again inscribed between the figures. Many of the historians of Bristol, in describing St. John's Church, mention this tomb, but all of them have failed to identify the persons in whose memory it was erected.

In recent years the tomb has been fully described by Miss Roper in the *Proceedings of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society*, and the date of it is attributed to early in the sixteenth century—partly as the lady is credited with a pedimental head-dress, and partly on the assumption that inscribed slabs are chiefly of that date. Since that description was written the tomb has been more closely studied by the late Mr. Alfred Hudd, F.S.A., and recent cleansing of the slab has enabled the present writer to examine its details still more closely.



TOMB IN CRYPT, SOUTH-WEST WALL.

(*Photo by* HORTON.)

INCISED SLAB ON TOMB IN CRYPT, S.W. SIDE.

(*Drawn by* A. G. HIRST.)

Mr. Hudd in his valuable paper on "Merchants' Marks" states that the Merchant's Mark (Plate VIII., 9) on this tomb is in all probability that of Bernard Muleward. Reference to *Bristol Wills* (Wadley) shows that Bernard Muleward lived in A.D. 1407–9, as his name appears as a witness to a will and a deed in those years, and it is by no means improbable that he may have lived to about A.D. 1420. It is therefore quite possible that the tomb might have been erected in his memory as late as A.D. 1425, and this date is not inconsistent with the architectural character of the canopy. The name of the Muleward family frequently occurs in *Bristol Wills*. The wills of John Muleward (who died in A.D. 1388), the brother of Bernard, and of Richard Muleward (who died in 1387) the father of Bernard, and that of his mother Edith Muleward, have all been transcribed by Wadley. The father lived in a house on the "Bridge of Avon," which he left to his son Bernard, and both he and Edith his wife left legacies in their wills for carrying on restoration work at St. Mary Redcliffe Church. This was at or about the date when William Canynge the elder was connected with that work. It seems very probable that as the father was a man of wealth, and both he and his widow left money to St. Mary Redcliffe restoration, so the son Bernard may have been one of those who together with the Frampton family assisted in the building of St. John's Church. If this theory be correct it would account for the handsome and elaborate tomb accorded to Bernard Muleward and his family. The further examination of the incised figures recently undertaken tends to show that the head-dress of the wives incised on the slab is not pedimental, but of a considerably earlier type; and with regard to the date to which incised slabs are generally attributed, there are many instances that might be quoted of sufficiently early date to agree with that of Muleward. Moreover, certain fragments of the inscription tend to confirm the same theory. It is now possible, therefore,

to say that in all probability this is the tomb of Bernard Muleward, probably one of the original benefactors and founders of the Church.

### ALTAR TOMB ON SOUTH-EAST WALL.

(Plate III.)

This tomb is of great interest and of handsome design ; the two ends are divided into panels with carved figures of angels holding shields ; the work is early Renaissance in character, and accords with the date of the costumes of the effigies, probably A.D. 1500 to 1600. On the front are carved diminutive figures of six boys and five girls, and in the centre is a shield which evidently formerly bore a coat of arms ; but all traces of it have disappeared and this was the condition as long ago as the year 1843, when the author of the *Churches of Bristol* wrote his account of the Crypt. On the tomb are the recumbent effigies of a man and woman ; these figures are executed in alabaster and beautifully carved in every detail. The man is dressed as a merchant, and has an alderman's gown ; the female costume is characteristic of the same period, and has a penner and a small ink-horn suspended from the waist by a scarf. The head-dress is pedimental and of the type characteristic of the above-named date. All the historians who have mentioned this tomb have described it as in memory of a civic dignitary unknown ; it is probable that further investigations now in progress will settle the identity. So far as investigations have now gone they point to its being the tomb of William Ellis and his wife ; he was Churchwarden in A.D. 1580 and Mayor in A.D. 1598. His burial is recorded in the register on 9th August, 1616, and Mary his wife in August, 1599. Barrett is responsible for ascribing it to the Rowley family, on the ground of its resemblance to the Rowley brass in the Church above : but the figures of the children

are not on the brass as described by him, and the head-dress of the female figure is quite incompatible with the date of the Rowley brass.

Other monuments deserving of mention are the following :—

Four altar-shaped tombs, three placed underneath the windows of the north wall and one on the south wall. These tombs are covered with stone slabs, each having an incised cross and an inscription round the margin ; the crosses are of elegant design and probably of fourteenth or fifteenth century date ; the inscriptions have unfortunately become undecipherable ; it is, however, quite a possible conjecture that they are memorials to early Rectors of the Church.

Sir George Snygge, son of Baron Snygge, is buried in the Crypt. He was drowned on 27th December, 1610, at ten o'clock at night, in crossing Rownham Ferry on his return from Sir Hugh Smyth's house at Ashton. His body was found on the 10th June following, without legs or hands and was buried in this Crypt.

Memorial stones on the floor as follows :—

Hugh Griffeth, merchant, died 1597, Sheriff of Bristol in 1590. His Merchant's Mark is incised on the stone. (Plate VIII., 4.)

William Jones, died 1645. He was Sheriff 1622, Mayor 1637, Churchwarden of St. John's in 1635, Master of the Society of Merchants, 1641.

William Innys, died 1704. He was of the family of Innys whose monument in the Church has been referred to. The Innys coat of arms is incised upon the stone.

Andrew Innys. This stone marks the burial-place of Andrew Innys, whose monument is in the Church above, as well as many members of his family.

HUGH BROWNE TOMB IN CHURCHYARD.

(*Photo by* T. F. HOBBS.)

William Donning, died 1692. This mural tablet, now on the east wall of the Crypt, is a part of a larger monument originally placed in the Church. There is on the floor a stone which marks the burial-place, and has incised upon it the arms of William Donning (Churchwarden 1665). He was Sheriff in 1677, Master of the Society of Merchants 1687. The tablet also commemorates John Donning, merchant, who died in 1701.

## MONUMENTS IN THE CHURCHYARD.

Hugh Browne tomb (Plate VII.). This monument is of great interest. It commemorates Alderman Hugh Browne and his wife. Both the architectural design and the sculpture are well executed; the front of the tomb as it now appears and the slate roof which disfigures it are evidently restorations of a date much later than the tomb itself, but no record exists of its original appearance externally. The tomb has been fully described by Miss Roper in the *Proceedings of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society* (1911), and the following particulars are taken from that description.

The effigies are placed on a high vaulted tomb of two tiers; the man reclines on the higher tier against the wall about a foot above the figure of the lady; on the front of the tomb are the diminutive figures in high relief of the son and four daughters kneeling on tasselled cushions one behind the other. The vaulting is divided into panels containing carved cinquefoils and roses; on the back wall is a design containing the coat of arms wreathed with bays and a crest. The arms are: "Arg. on a bend between two cotises indented (outside not counter indented) sa. three eagles displayed." Crest: on an esquire's helmet and mantling, issuing out of a mural coronet an eagle's head and neck between two wings. (Plate VIII., 5.) The man is dressed in the robe of an alderman with a band of fur with short sleeves edged with

narrow fur, he holds in his right hand a clasped Bible. The lady is dressed in a long tight-bodiced gown high in the neck and has a folded girdle, over the shoulders is a kerchief fastened by a brooch. The inscription on the tomb had entirely disappeared, but Miss Roper was instrumental in recovering it by the aid of the Savage MS. book at Ashton Court, and it has now been reinscribed on a marble tablet fixed on the front wall. The inscription is as follows :—

MEMORIAE.

Viri admodum pii tam gratiae quam naturae subsidiis instructissimi Hugonis Browne hujus civitatis mercatoris insignissimi, qui postquam summo magistratus munere singulari cum prudentiae et integritate functus esset publico civium detrimento suo autem ineffabili lucro nobis ereptus caelo additus est, die Novembris 12° Anõ Dmi 1653 : et eatat : suae 48

Diu vixit qui bene vixit.

and the approximate English translation may be added :—

"To the memory of Hugh Browne a most renowned merchant of this City, a truly good man most richly endowed with gifts both of nature and grace, who after serving the office of Chief Magistrate with marked wisdom and uprightness to the loss of his neighbours but to his own unspeakable gain was taken from us and added to the Heavenly Host on November 12th, 1653, aged 48—A good life is a long life."

Hugh Browne was Sheriff of Bristol in 1642, Mayor of Bristol 1650, Master of the Society of Merchants 1644, 1649, 1651–52. He lived at a house No. 11 Corn Street, Bristol, which formerly contained a fine mantelpiece bearing his initials as well as his own coat of arms, and the arms of the Merchant Venturers. He belonged to the Parliamentary party, and lived in Bristol through the two sieges. The monument is illustrated by a sketch by Rowbottom dated 1825 in the Braikenridge Collection in the Bristol Art Gallery.

Hugh Browne left a legacy to the poor of St. John's Parish as well as to Redcliffe Parish. In his will he devised a fee-farm rent of £8 17s. 0d. payable out of land at Hambrook for the above purpose. This gift was lost to the parish, for the fee-farm rent had belonged to the Crown, and on the restoration of Charles II. was wrested from the Trustees.

Edmund Browne. This is a mural tablet fixed near the Hugh Browne monument. The tablet and its inscription had nearly perished from age and decay when restored in 1921. Edmund Browne was the father of Hugh Browne. He was Churchwarden in 1605 and died 21st March, 1635. The inscription was recovered by the aid of Miss Roper by reference to Savage's MS. book at Ashton Court. It runs as follows:—

HIC INHUMATUR
EDMUNDUS BROWNE
MERCATOR
QUI OBIIT 21 DIE MARTII ANNO
AETATIS SUAE OCTAGESIMO TERTIO
ANNOQUE DOMINE 1635

Learn thou that on this casts thine eyes
From him that here interred lyes
Things sublunary like the Moon
Though in full splendour yet full soon
Comes to the wane this is not strange
Things here are subject unto change
Merchants like to their ships may sayle
At first with prosperous wind yet faile
At last if God makes storms to rise
And shipwreck humane enterprise.

Jeremy Martin, M.D. This is a mural tablet discovered buried beneath the ground in 1921 and refixed on the wall. Jeremy Martin has been mentioned previously in connection with the Innys monument. The coat of arms is that of Martin impaling Lort as on the Innys monument in the Church. (Plate VIII., 3.)

Richard Pownall. This is a mural tablet on the west wall and has an interesting inscription commemorating a former Rector who held that office for forty years and died in 1670. The inscription had become illegible from decay, but was recovered and recut in 1921. It is quaint in character and runs as follows :—

Near to this place lyeth the
Body of Mr. Richard Pownall
Rector of this Parish by the
Space of 40 years who in the
Fiftieth year of his marridge
and in the 79th year of his age
Exchandgcd this short and painful
Life for a Blessed Immortality
September the 3rd Ano Dom 1670
Per varios casus
Tendimus in caelos
And also the Body of
Elizabeth his loving Wife
Who departed this Life
November the 9th day Ano Dom
1674
aetatis suae 71.

John King and Samuel Hartnell. This is an altar tomb of somewhat elaborate Renaissance design. John King died in 1734, and was an ancestor of the King family well known as Bristol merchants. Samuel Hartnell died in 1715, was a relative of King and a benefactor to St. John's Church. The monument was restored in 1921.

Clarke tomb. This tomb commemorates William Clarke who died April, 1811, and other members of a family which for many generations has been closely connected with St. John's Church and is still represented by the present Churchwarden and the Vestry Clerk. The first-named William Clarke was a Churchwarden and Vestry Clerk, and his son William Lewton Clarke, who

was Mayor of Bristol in 1843, succeeded him as Vestry Clerk. The family connection was continued by his son Charles Stewart Clarke, who was again succeeded by his sons William Hurle Clarke and John Henry Clarke, who was Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers 1897–98. His son, Charles Cyril Clarke, the present Churchwarden, was Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers 1920–21.

The present Vestry Clerk, William Sefton Clarke, nephew of William Hurle and John Henry Clarke, was Churchwarden in 1901–6. He served in France during the Great War 1914–18, and in the Vestry Minute Book is a resolution on 8th February, 1915, congratulating him on his patriotic action. His reply, written in the trenches, is annexed to the minutes of 23rd June, 1915.

## RECTORS OF THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

This list is taken from Barrett's *History of Bristol*, with certain amendments and additions.

| *Patrons.* | *Date.* | *Rectors.* |
|---|---|---|
| Abbot and Convent of Tewkesbury. | 1285 | William Beind. |
| | 1286 | John de Stowey. |
| | 1304 | Thomas de Ciston. |
| | 1309 | Dom Pagan de Bristol. |
| | 1337 | William de Bermingham. |
| | 1361 | John Lovestoke de Aston. |
| | | John Bonecocke. |
| | 1369 | Henry Cammile. |
| | 1379 | Richard Wodecote. |
| | | William Wade. |
| | 1385 | Richard Maykyn. |
| | 1388 | Richard Wormbrugge. |
| | 1392 | Richard Croke. |
| | 1394 | John Tony. |
| | 1406 | John Shaw (Schawen). |
| | 1420 | John Mybbys. |
| | 1427 | Richard Clerk. |
| | 1433 | Thomas Wheton. |
| | 1460 | Nicholas Russel. |
| | 1465 | Thomas Clent (Clynt). |
| | 1482 | William Thomas (Thoms). |
| | 1505 | Walter Walshe. |
| | 1507 | John Toste. |
| Sir Charles Somerset. | 1531 | Thomas Tasker. |
| | 1551 | Thomas Taylor. |
| Mayor and Aldermen. | 1567 | Roger Price. |
| | 1580 | Roger Rice (last Rector of St. Lawrence). |
| | 1590 | William Davells. |
| | 1615 | Edward Shaw. |
| | 1630 | Richard Pownall. |

| *Patrons.* | *Date.* | *Rectors.* |
|---|---|---|
| Mayor and Aldermen. | 1670 | Thomas Palmer. |
| | 1688 | James Taylor. |
| | 1722 | James Taylor (Junior). |
| | 1734 | Carew Reynell (Chancellor of Bristol). |
| | 1739 | John Bound. |
| | 1766 | John Davie. |
| | 1779 | Thomas Johnes. |
| | 1826 | Joseph Porter. |
| The Bristol Church Trustees. | 1834 | George Neale Barrow. |
| | 1855 | Isaac Sadler Gale. |
| | 1871 | William Samuel Bruce. |
| | 1885 | Philip Ashby Phelps. |
| | 1908 | Samuel Ernest Swann. |

## CHURCH REGISTERS, CHURCHWARDENS' BOOKS, AND CHURCHWARDENS OF EARLY DATE.

The Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials commence in A.D. 1558.

On 30th September, 1538, Thomas Cromwell, Vicar-General, sent Archbishop Cranmer a series of injunctions for the direction of Parish Priests, ordering, among other things, that every priest should keep a book in which he should enter every wedding, christening and burying. St. John's Rector appears to have complied with this injunction within a reasonable time, and the registers have been preserved with care up to the present time by successive Rectors.

The earliest Churchwardens' Book is a volume of historical interest. Many of its pages are written in ecclesiastical lettering with decorated capitals. The entries commence in A.D. 1469 and extend to A.D. 1581.

On the first page is inscribed :—

"Memorand that this boke was made in the ffeest of Sent Mathue th Apostle in the yere of our Lorde God MCCCCLXIX and geven unto the Church of Sent John Baptiste of Bristow to the Lawd of God oure Lady and Sent John, Willm Archer Gold Smyth then beying oon of the Wardeyns and Procuratus of the seid Church."

Here follows the rent-roll of the Church properties, among them are properties in "Wynchstrete" (Wine Street) and "Grope Lane" (now Nelson Street).

The next entry which is of great interest is dated A.D. 1470, in the time of William Archer and Gregory Calf, Churchwardens, and it gives lists of ornaments and plate, of vestments and of books and of deeds.

A full list of these would occupy too much space, and it is only possible here to mention a few of the items.

The first item mentioned is :—

A double Cross with a . . . Mary and John, and for the same Cross a staff of copper and gilt.

A Cope of silver and gilt for the sacrament on Corpus Christi day, several Chasubles and many other items. Among the books are mentioned a Mass book with gilt clasps, and a Mass book for every day for the High Altar.

The next entry is the list referred to of the rental and tenements belonging to the "Crowd" of the Church. The first item is a property the gift of William Spencer and the five following properties the gift of Henry Chester and Thomas Rowley.

The next entry concerns the foundation of the Guild of the Holy Cross in the year 1465, which has already been referred to on page 27.

On the following pages appear several accounts of Chantry Charges that the Churchwardens of the Church are bound to undertake.

In the year 1542 is a list of Obits kept in the Church, viz. Walter Frampton's obit, Master Strange obit, the obit of all Good Doers and Howell's obit.

The Churchwarden's Account of A.D. 1533 shows that Thomas White was Churchwarden in that year. He was Mayor of Bristol in A.D. 1530, and in A.D. 1534 met Henry VIII. at Thornbury and presented Queen Anne with a silver-gilt cup containing 100 marks of gold on behalf of the city of Bristol. A copy of his will is in the "Great Red Book." He gave directions that he was to be buried in the "Crowdys of Saynt Joanes Baptist Bristow." He bequeathed to Bristol Cathedral the screen now in the choir which was "some tyme in the White Ffriers."

His Merchant's Mark is carved on a shield on this screen and an illustration of it given in Plate VIII., 12. He was probably the last to found an Obit service in a Bristol church. He also "bequeathed unto Thomas Tasker Parson of St. Jones Church 100s. sterling for tithes forgotten."

An interesting entry occurs in A.D. 1556 as follows :—

"Paid Mr. Nibbys for his copy of the injunction at the visitation of my Lord Cardinal Poull." This indicates the visit of Cardinal Pole in Queen Mary's reign. In that same year Cranmer suffered martyrdom, and Cardinal Pole was elected Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Vestry Book of A.D. 1609 gives a list of the Feoffees at that date ; the first name on the list is "George Snygge, Knight, one of the Barons of His Majesty's Court of Exchequer."

Baron Snygge, as he was generally called, was a notable figure in Bristol at that date. He was Recorder of Bristol 1592–1604, M.P. 1597, 1601, 1604. He proclaimed King James I. at the Civic High Cross in 1603. He died in 1617, and was buried in St. Stephen's Church, Bristol, where there is an elaborate monument to his memory in the south choir aisle.

He acted as a member of the Vestry and his signature appears in the Minute Books, but there is no record of his acting as Churchwarden. At his funeral his body lay in state in the Tailor's Hall as recorded elsewhere in these pages. His son was buried in the Crypt as mentioned in describing that part of the Church.

Among other Feoffees mentioned in the list are those of William Ellis, "one of the aldermen of the City of Bristol." He was Mayor in 1598, and is referred to in connection with the monuments in the Crypt. He was the father of Walter Ellis mentioned on page 52.

Also John Snygge, son of Sir George Snygge, and Edmund Browne. The latter was the father of Alderman Hugh Browne, whose monument is in the Churchyard.

In the Churchwardens' Accounts of A.D. 1680, John Cary being Churchwarden, appears an entry of interesting character, viz. :—

"Pd. Mr. Thomas Palmde being ye money collected on ye Bridge for ye Redemption of Captives £18 19s. 10d½."

In the seventeenth century it was no uncommon thing for the officers and crew of British ships to be captured by Turkish corsairs and carried into slavery; when this happened relatives or fellow-townsmen would get up a fund to ransom them.

In *Bristol Past and Present* is an account of a committee formed in Bristol to deal with the matter, who authorised the Churchwardens of Churches (with the consent of the Bishop) to collect money for that object and to hand it over to a receiver whom they appointed.

The earliest Churchwarden's Account is to be found not in the book above referred to but in the Jefferies MSS. (vol. 4, page 288) preserved in the Bristol Reference Library; the document appears to be a copy of the original and is written in Latin; it is headed :—

"Rentale ecclcē ste Johns Bristoll"

and is for the year A.D. 1419—

"temp henrici Somerford c Wille More procurat."

The list commences with a payment from the "Fraternity of St. John the Baptist" in respect of "Hasarde's Court"; and the other properties named are those in "Seynt Jones Lane" and "Knyfsmythstrete" and "Grope Lane."

The property in Knyfsmythstrete is stated to be held by Thomas Brook; it is a remarkable instance of continuity, both of Church property and of an old family, that this same property (although the actual buildings have probably been rebuilt) is at the present time held

under a lease to Mary Ann Brook. Mr. R. C. Tombs, I.S.O., to whom the writer is greatly indebted for valuable assistance in connection with St. John's registers and other old documents, has devoted special attention to the family of Brook, and considers that there is little doubt that this family have held the property continuously. The first John Brook, whose will is dated 15th February, 1395, left a legacy to the Rector and fabric of St. John's Church, and the names of various members of the family constantly appear in documents up to the year 1526, when Thomas Brook was Mayor, and thence onward to the year 1819, when Henry Brook was Mayor. His name appears as a merchant on St. John's Bridge from 1795 to 1813, and is inscribed on the Church list of Mayors who were inhabitants of the Parish of St. John's.

Among the same MSS. are the accounts for one or two rather later years. In one of them the tenant of the St. John's Lane property is given as "Wm. Wodington," this is no doubt the William Woddington who is mentioned in Adam's *Chronicle of Bristol* as Mayor in A.D. 1480, and who was the donor of the "two tables of alabaster" in the Chancel of the Church mentioned on page 22, and also was one of the founders of the Guild of the Holy Cross mentioned on page 8, and is again mentioned (page 31) as present at a meeting of Vestrymen on 7th March, A.D. 1472.

Of the Churchwardens of early date it is possible to mention only the names of one or two of the earliest and a few of the more prominent, and a list of those who held the office of Churchwarden and were also Mayors of Bristol.

A.D. 1310. John Dunning and Benedict de Goulbeye.
A.D. 1385. Hugh Plomer and Walter Portland.

The above are the four earliest Churchwardens recorded.

A.D. 1558 (1st year of Queen Elizabeth). John Draper, merchant, will printed by Wadley. Directions to be buried in St. John's Church. Witnessed by Roger Rice, Rector of St. John Baptist.

A.D. 1544 and 1553. John Sebryght. His Merchant's Mark from a St. John's MS. is illustrated on Plate VIII., 11. He appears to have been the Chamberlain of Bristol in 1551 (Barrett). He is also interesting as being the father of Margaret Tyndall who was a great benefactor to St. John's, and the Charity founded by her is referred to elsewhere in these pages.

A.D. 1685. Sir Abraham Elton, 1st Baronet, Mayor 1710 and 1720, M.P. 1722, Master of the Society of Merchants 1708. He lived in Small Street in a house subsequently the Bristol Water Works Office, in which was a fine stone chimney-piece with his initials and the date 1700. In his will he left a benefaction to the poor of the parish.

A.D. 1740. George Daubeny, father of George Daubeny who was M.P. in A.D. 1781.

A.D. 1775. John Daubeny, son of the above George Daubeny.

The following Churchwardens were also Mayors of Bristol :—

| | |
|---|---|
| Thomas White .. .. .. .. | A.D. 1530. |
| Thomas Chester .. .. .. .. | A.D. 1569. |
| William Ellis .. .. .. .. .. | A.D. 1598. |
| Rice Jones (Sheriff 1584) .. .. .. | A.D. 1599 |
| Christopher Whitson.. .. .. .. | A.D. 1626. |
| William Jones (Master of the Society of Merchants A.D. 1641) .. .. .. | A.D. 1637. |
| John Tailor .. .. .. .. .. | A.D. 1640. |
| John Lock .. .. .. .. .. | A.D. 1641. |
| Richard Aldworth .. .. .. .. | A.D. 1642. |
| James Donning .. .. .. .. | A.D. 172?. |
| Henry Brooke .. .. .. .. | A.D. 1813. |
| William Lewton Clarke .. .. .. | A.D. 1843. |

## CHURCH MANUSCRIPTS AND SEALS.

The Church possesses an unusually large number of MSS.—about 550—dating back to about A.D. 1240, and all have been carefully catalogued. A large proportion of them consist of Leases and Agreements relating to the Church property; their value lies, however, more particularly in the antiquarian data which they contain, and in the Seals and Merchants' Marks attached to them. It was customary for the Mayor in early times to attach his seal to many documents of a legal character, and the names of many of the early Mayors of Bristol appear in these MSS.

The ancient names of streets, such as Wynchstrete, Bradstrete, Knyfsmythstrete, Grope Lane, Horse Street, etc., are of archæological interest.

It is not possible in these pages to mention more than a few of the most interesting deeds and seals.

| *Date.* | *Deed.* | *Seal.* |
|---|---|---|
| Fourteenth century, about A.D. 1376. | Memorandum with brass pipe attached showing size of a "penne" (feather) for supplying water; agreement between Mayor of Bristol and Prior of the Preaching Friars. | Fine Seal of Convent. |
| A.D. 1310. | John Dunning and Benedict de Goulbeye, Proctors of St. John of Bradstrete. Earliest Churchwardens recorded. John le Taverner Mayor. | |
| A.D. 1375. | Grant of two houses between the new Gate . . . and the King's Mill called Castle Mill. | Walter Frampton's seal, Mayor and Founder of St. John's Church. |

| *Date.* | *Deed.* | *Seal.* |
|---|---|---|
| A.D. 1381. | Grant of two houses outside Newgate. | Seal of William Canynge, Mayor. |
| A.D. 1390. | Grant of Land for cemetery to Richard Wormbrugge, Parson of St. John's. | Great Seal of Richard II. |
| A.D. 1394. | License of the King to grant John Tony (Rector) a house in St. John's Lane held by the Crown. | Seal as above. |
| A.D. 1395. | John Tony, Rector, and Thomas - atte - Mede and John Brown, Proctors of the Church, grant of 12d. p.a. for a piece of Land for Chancel of Church. | |

Other interesting seals are those of William Frome, Mayor A.D. 1395; William Spencer, Mayor A.D. 1479, one of the Mayors illustrated in Ricart's Calendar; John Spyne, Mayor A.D. 1421; John Northall, Mayor A.D. 1553.

Seals of the Boroughs of Caerleon A.D. 1533 and Cowbridge A.D. 1549.

There are several curious entries in deeds, viz. A.D. 1424 grant of a tenement. Wife of lessor is "to receive yearly at Christmas a new robe value 13s. 4d. and every other year at the same time a new fur value 13s. 4d."

Another deed of 4th July, 1579—a lease of two houses, one in St. John's Lane adjoining the back door of Nich Shee and the Parsonage of St. John's, and the other at the corner of Broad Street having the house of Thomas Chester, Alderman, at the back. Rent 55s. and a "couple of good capons at Christmas!"

## CHURCH PLATE.

The Church Plate now in use is with one exception of comparatively modern date, chiefly early Victorian, and of silver, with one or two plated pieces. There is also a silver Loving Cup, presented by John Farr in A.D. 1821.

There are also two brass Candlesticks, reputed to have been presented to the Church by Bishop Woodford of Ely.

The author of *The Church Goer*, who was at one time a member of St. John's Vestry, states that the curacy and "title" upon which the Bishop was ordained was St. John the Baptist, Bristol.

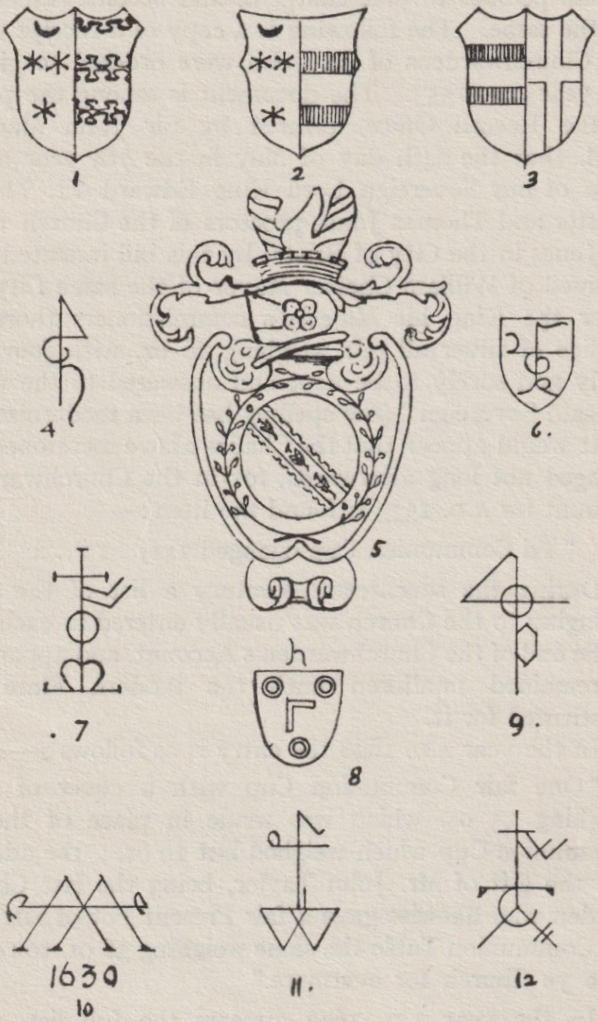
The exception above referred to is a very interesting Dish or Plate at one time used as an almsdish; it is beautifully embossed, silver-gilt, and has a removable centre with date 1630 and the initials W.S.E. There is also a Merchant's Mark (Plate VIII., 10) which is doubtless that of Walter Ellis. The mark is illustrated and referred to in the late Mr. A. E. Hudd's paper on "Bristol Merchant Marks," but the identity was unknown to him. There is also a shield of arms of six quarterings; on each of three of the quarterings is a dove carrying an olive branch. The appearance of the decoration is rather secular than ecclesiastical and its origin has been for long in doubt. Quite recently the present writer has discovered among the old Churchwardens' Accounts a memorandum which solves the difficulty, and indicates that the Plate was the gift of Mr. Walter Ellis in A.D. 1629.

He was Churchwarden in A.D. 1618, and a member of the Vestry for many years afterwards. The entry in the Churchwarden's (Mr. Christopher Whitson) Accounts is as follows: "One other piece of gilt plate for the Communion Table weighing 15 oz. . . . the piece of plate for the Communion Table was the gift of Mr. Walter Ellis, Merchant."

In pre-Reformation times there was doubtless a considerable quantity of plate belonging to the Church but it is difficult to ascertain precisely what happened to it, although certain references to it appear from time to time: they are of sufficient interest to quote.

In the years A.D. 1552–53, in the reign of Edward VI., Commissioners were appointed to take an inventory of

PLATE VIII.




COATS OF ARMS AND MERCHANTS' MARKS.

(*Drawn by* H. C. M. HIRST.)

church plate, jewels, vestments, bells, etc., and to appoint certain persons to take charge of and become responsible for the same. The following is a copy of a receipt which the Churchwardens of St. John were ordered to give in the year A.D. 1553. The document is among the papers in the Record Office, printed by Sir John Maclean. "Md. that the 24th day of May in the 7th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Edward VI. Thomas Chester and Thomas Jones proctors of the Church called St. Jones in the City of Bristol by this bill indented have received of William Chester Mayor of the same City and other the King his Majesty's commissioners there one Chalice of silver all gilt weighing 10 oz. with four bells safely and surely to be kept and answered to the use of our said Sovereign" (the spelling has been modernised).

It would appear that the Chalice above mentioned was changed not long afterwards, for in the Churchwarden's Account for A.D. 1573 is found the item :—

"Pd Communion Cup changed $\text{III}^{\text{j}}$ . $\text{II}^{\text{s}}$ . $\text{x}^{\text{d}}$"

During the seventeenth century a list of the Plate belonging to the Church was usually entered in each year at the end of the Churchwarden's Account, and apparently it remained unaltered until the modern Plate was substituted for it.

In the year A.D. 1628 the entry is as follows :—

"One fair Communion Cup with a cover of silver weighing 35 oz. which was made in place of the old Communion Cup which weighed but 19 oz. ; the addition was the gift of Mr. John Taylor, being the last Churchwarden who likewise gave a fair Present Pot of Silver for the Communion Table the same weighing 56 oz. to remain unto ye Church for evermore."

In the year A.D. 1632 appears the full list, which continued to be inserted in succeeding years. It reads as follows :—

"One fair Communion Cup with a cover weighing

35 oz., one Plate of silver and gilt weighing 15 oz., one other piece of silver plate weighing 12 oz."

The Plate of silver and gilt weighing 15 oz. is the one given by Walter Ellis referred to on page 52.

## ROYAL ARMS.

There are three examples of the Royal Arms now remaining in the Church. Formerly there was another of the time of Queen Elizabeth. A sketch of this is preserved in the Braikenridge Collection, but it has disappeared from the Church. The remaining Arms are :—

1. In the Crypt, the Stuart period, A.D. 1603–89.

2. In the Vestry, a pair of Shields of ornamental design. The lion on the dexter side has the arms of George I., the unicorn on the sinister side has the Royal Crown with the initials "G.R."

In St. Peter's Church, Bristol, are arms of very similar design.

3. In Vestry in a frame, the arms of George III.

## SWORD REST.

Most of the Bristol churches possess Sword Rests, denoting the close connection between Church and State. That at St. John's is very elegant in design, about 4 feet 6 inches high, the framework being of hammered bars enriched with beaten foliage, and is early eighteenth century in date.

## THE BELLS.

| *Name.* | *Date.* | *Diameter.* | *Inscription.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ting Tang | 1785 | 17 ins. | Jonas Hill cast me 1785. |
| Treble .. | 1706 | 28⅞ ins. | A R 1706. (A larger and heavier bell than the second.) |

| *Name.* | *Date.* | *Diameter.* | *Inscription.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Second | 1649 | 28½ ins. | "I am the firs although but small I will be hard above you all." 1649 R.P.M. Robert Blackborow M. John Wright, Churchwardens of St. John's W. P. |
| The Third | 1706 | 32 ins. | God save the Queen. A.R. 1706 (*i.e.* Queen Anne). |
| The Fourth | 1706 | 33¼ ins. | Edward Taylor, John James, Churchwarden. A.R. 1706. |
| Fifth.. .. | 1649 | 36⅞ ins. | Robert Blackborow, John Wright, C. W. William Purdue and Richard cast me 1649. |
| Tenor .. | 1649 | 40½ ins. | I sound to beed the sick repent in hope of life when breath is spent. 1649. M. Robert Blackborow, M. John Wright, Churchwardens of St. Johnes—William Purdue and Ri. Purdue. |

On the frame is :—

"This frame was made and set John Hart and John Wilcox the 2.7 . . . Robert Blackborow and John Wright . . . ndens."

In A.D. 1649 William and Richard Purdue of Closworth, Somerset, and of Salisbury, Wilts, cast a new ring of five for St. John's, Bristol.

In 1706 Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester added the Treble and recast the third and fourth. In 1785 Jonas Hill recast the Ting Tang.

William Worcester mentions bells in the earliest account of the Church, about A.D. 1370.

The earliest mention of the bells in the Churchwardens Accounts is in A.D. 1543, where there are items "cost upon the bells," "cost of setting up the bells."

The bells were entirely rehung in a new iron frame by T. Blackburn, Salisbury, December, 1895.

In the reign of Edward VI., A.D. 1553, the Churchwardens were required to acknowledge by a formal receipt that they had received and taken charge of Church Plate and properties from the Mayor of Bristol (William Chester) and other the King's Commissioners. Sir John Maclean quotes a copy of this document in the Record Office. In this list appears "4 Bells."

The Churchwardens' Accounts of 1571 shows that one bell was recast by a person named Jefferis. Their account of 1573 contains an item "for a whele to the saunce bell llld." The "saunce" was the "sanctus" bell.

In the year 1558 we find in the Churchwardens' Accounts an item for "ringing at the proclamation of the Queen" (Elizabeth).

From that day down to the present time the bells have played their part in history, marking the occasion of great events, as on the memorable day of 11th November, 1918, when they announced the Armistice, and the end of the greatest war in history.

*Note on p. 52, para. 3.*

Subsequent to the printing of this book the coat of arms on the Dish has been identified, viz. "Per fess azure and argent a pale counterchanged three doves 2 and 1 volant dexterways of the second each holding in its beak an olive branch or." TALLOW CHANDLERS COMPANY.

## BENEFACTORS AND CHARITIES.

There are a very considerable number of Charities connected with the Parish. It is beyond the scope of this work to describe them in detail, a list of them is given in Barrett's *History of Bristol* and in Manchee's *Bristol Charities;* it will be sufficient here to mention a few only which are of special interest.

In the early history of the Church there were many benefactors who left legacies in their wills either for the benefit of the Rector or for the sustentation of the fabric of the Church. Some of these have already been referred to. The name of Thomas White is worthy of mention, he is referred to elsewhere in the notes on Churchwardens. In his will dated 10th September, 1543, he left 20s. yearly for the repair of "Saynt Jones pype in Brode Strete."

The majority of the Charities date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: several of them are gifts of bread or money for the poor inhabitants of the Parish, others are for the benefit of poor widows or for women in St. John's Almshouses, and one or two are for sermons to be preached in the Church annually on certain days. These benefactions are now regulated by schemes authorised by the Charity Commissioners; the majority are grouped together and are administered as a whole under the general title of Parochial Charities.

There are only two Charities which are now managed separately under special Trustees; these are the Margaret Tyndall Charity and the Stubbs and Edwards Charity.

The Margaret Tyndall Charity is an educational endowment for the purpose of making grants and exhibitions for the benefit of children at approved schools and for similar purposes.

A copy of the will of Margaret Tyndall is preserved in the "Great Orphan Book" at the Bristol Council House, as well as in the Bristol Probate Office; it is dated 30th March, 1605, and she died within a few days of that date, for the record of her burial is given in St. John's Register as 10th April, 1605. She was the widow of Robert Tyndall, and the daughter of John Sebryght who was Churchwarden in 1544, and is referred to in the notes on Churchwardens. Margaret Tyndall left directions to be buried in St. John's Churchyard, and "a tombstone there sett with my name engraved and the date and year of my buriall for a memorial," the sum of 4d. yearly to the parson and his successors for "the room of the stone there to stand." Unfortunately this tombstone has disappeared.

Stubbs and Edwards Charity, after providing for the payment of certain sermons to be preached by the Rector of the Parish is allocated chiefly for the benefit of almspeople in St. John's Almshouses. Richard Stubbs' gift dates from A.D. 1665 and Thomas Edwards' from A.D. 1687.

## JOHN FARR'S CHARITY.

John Farr in 1821 presented to the Vestry a silver goblet and 25 guineas, the purpose of which is stated in a memorandum in the Churchwardens' Book as follows :—

"19th July, 1821, Mr. John Farr presented to the Revd. William Mirehouse, curate, and The Vestry of this parish a silver goblet in commemoration of the Coronation of his Majesty King George IV. which took place this day. Also 25 guineas the interest thereof to be given as follows, viz. :—five shillings for wine at the election of churchwardens every year to be drank out of the aforsaid goblet, and 20/s. a year to be given to the women residing in St. John's Almshouse, on the 11th day of December, except there should be a coronation in that year; then

the women are to receive 20/s. on that day, instead of the 11th of December."

The silver goblet with John Farr's name inscribed is still preserved, but the observance of the ceremony at the election of Churchwardens fell into abeyance. The centenary of this gift was celebrated by members of the Vestry at a dinner on 2nd May, 1921, when the silver goblet was duly honoured.

## ST. JOHN'S CHURCHYARD.

The Churchyard is situated in St. John's Street, but the approach to it is from Broad Street through Tailors' Court. By a deed preserved among the Church MSS. dated 4th January, 1390, Edmund Arthur granted to John Knyghton, clerk, "a garden called Hasardys garden with ingress and egress to and from the same through the gate of grantors house called Hasardys tenement in Brade St." The seal of William Canynge, Mayor, is attached.

Another deed dated 6th May, 1390, is a licence under the Great Seal of Richard II. to John Knyghton and William Chastell to assign to Richard Wormbrugge, Parson of St. John's, a piece of land 94 ft. in length and 59 ft. in breadth held of the King by the payment of 1d. landgable for a cemetery.

Another deed dated 12th June, 1409, is a notification by Robert Burneby, Clerk and Notary Public, that the garden ground was on that date consecrated as a cemetery for the Parish of St. John by Stephen, Bishop of Ross. Another deed of the same year recites an agreement between the Abbot of Tewkesbury (acting for St. James's Priory) and John Schawe, Parson of St. John's, whereby the latter parish was to be allowed a cemetery of its own, the parishioners having hitherto been buried in St. James's Churchyard.

In the early Rent Rolls of 1419 and 1424 payments to the Church are recorded in respect of "Hasarde Court" from the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist.

A deed of 19th May, 1489, records that "a party of the Fraternity of St. John having on Sunday 22nd of March armed themselves with daggers, swords and clubs obstructed the path through Hasardes tenement leading from Broad St. to St. John's Cemetery closed the gates there in the face of William Thoms rector and others to

their great damage whereupon a jury was sworn and the defendants were found guilty, some being fined twenty pence."

This quotation seems to show a very warlike attitude on the part of the Tailors, but the exact point in dispute is not apparent.

"The Fraternity of St. John the Baptist" referred to above was a guild of craftsmen founded in A.D. 1392, sometimes designated as the "Fraternity of Tailors of Brystowe of the Gild of St. John the Baptiste," but more generally known by the title of the Merchant Tailors' Guild. This Guild had its Chapel of St. John the Baptist in the Church of St. Ewen (or St. Owen as it was then called), and it had its Hall in Tailors' Court, through which access is obtained to the cemetery. This Hall was originally built in A.D. 1401, which would be eleven years subsequent to the grant of the garden as a cemetery already quoted. The Hall was rebuilt in A.D. 1740, and stands to this day, although now used as printing works. The old entrance doorway has carved over it the interesting coat of arms of the Merchant Tailors' Guild. It is on record that on the death of Baron Snygge, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, Recorder of Bristol 1592, M.P. for Bristol 1597, who was buried in St. Stephen's Church where there is a handsome monument to his memory, his body lay in state for six weeks in this Hall. He was one of the Feoffees of St. John the Baptist.

## ST. JOHN'S ALMSHOUSES.

The Almshouses were situated near the ancient Blind Gate at the end of John Street. Tradition says they were founded by Robert Strange in A.D. 1491. He was three times Mayor of Bristol, viz. in 1475, 1483 and 1490. His tomb is stated to have been in St. John's Churchyard. Thomas White in his will dated 1543 leaves a legacy to "Strange's Almshouses." Evidently this refers to St. John's Almshouses, which were sometimes known by the name of their founder. Among the St. John's MSS. is a document dated A.D. 1629 concerning a Chancery suit by a descendant of Robert Strange, who claimed certain properties left for the maintenance of the Charity. Barrett relates that in A.D. 1640 Dr. Wright, Bishop of Bristol, held an inquiry into the manner in which the Charity had been managed.

In A.D. 1721 the Almhouses having become ruinous were taken down and rebuilt. An illustration in the *Proceedings of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society*, vol. xxxv., shows the old arch and the Almshouses beyond.

In the year 1907 the Almshouses were transferred to the Parish of St. Ambrose, Bristol East, which had become the daughter parish of St. John the Baptist, having been founded by the ancient Church. The old Almshouses had become out of date, and the new buildings provide much better accommodation and more healthy surroundings.

## THE RECTORY.

The earliest mention of a Rectory House or Parsonage is in an ancient Rent Roll dated A.D. 1419, in which is mentioned a house in St. John's Lane occupied by the Rector. A similar entry is found in the Rent Roll of 1424. The next reference is in a St. John's MS. A deed dated 4th July, A.D. 1579, is an assignment of a lease of certain houses. One of them is described as in St. John's Lane, between a house of William Johns, merchant, on the west, and the back door of Nicholas Shee (Churchwarden in A.D. 1549) and the "Parsonage of St. John's" on the east, indicating that the Parsonage was in St. John's Lane. The next mention is in a deed dated 7th July, A.D. 1662, which is an assignment of an estate by John Lock, the last surviving Trustee of Wm. Burrus, Gent., to Jeremy Martin and others, Feoffees of St. John's, and recites that in A.D. 1635 Burrus granted a house at the west corner of Christmas Street, adjoining St. Lawrence Churchyard on the west, for the free use of the Rector of St. John's and his successors.

*Note.*—It would appear that Wm. Burrus was Churchwarden in A.D. 1610, and is identical with the Wm. Burrowes whose name appears on the list of Benefactors in the Vestry as giving a dwelling-house to the Rector of the Parish. Wm. Burrowes was Sheriff of Bristol in A.D. 1611, and his widow was buried in St. John's Crypt.

In A.D. 1760, as appears from a deed among the MSS., the Feoffees and the Rev. John Bound, Rector, entered into a contract for £200 with Robt. Comfort, mason, to build "a substantial house in Christmas Street on land belonging to the Corporation leading towards the newly-erected St. John's Bridge," the £200 having been paid by the Corporation on exchanging the ground for the old Rectory of the Parish. It would appear that this new house was the old Rectory House, which remained

standing until the year 1914, when it was purchased and pulled down by the Corporation for the purpose of widening Rupert Street.

The present Rectory is in Berkeley Square, Clifton.

## ST. JOHN'S CONDUIT.

In ancient times the inhabitants of Bristol obtained water by means of conduits, which conveyed it from the adjacent hills to various points in the city, where cisterns and taps were placed. Instances may be mentioned, such as the Redcliffe pipe, which starting from Knowle Hill conveys water to a point on Redcliffe Hill near the church, with an extension of the same to a point in ~~Temple~~ St Thomas Parish. There is also a water pipe adjoining All Saints' Church and another in St. Stephen's Street, but these are outside the scope of this narrative, which deals with St. John's.

St. John's Conduit originates and draws its water from a spring on Brandon Hill ; the water passes thence down Park Street, through Culvert Street, Wells Street, Frogmore Street and Pipe Lane, and these streets evidently were so named from the fact that the pipe passed through them. From thence it passes near Colston Hall, and then along Host Street and Christmas Street to St. John's Church. The pipe throughout the greater part of its length is a 1½ inch lead pipe. In Park Street the pipe runs through an arched passage way or conduit about 2 feet wide and 5 feet high, and at a point about midway between Park Street Avenue and the top of Park Street there are collecting cisterns of considerable size, which are accessible by means of a manhole. The writer some years ago walked through this conduit and examined the cisterns, and made a plan of the whole conduit which is now placed in the Church Vestry.

The earliest historical reference to this pipe is a document among the St. John's MSS. It is dated 1st October, 1376, and is the copy of an old MS. in the "White Book" of Bristol. It records an agreement made between the Mayor and Commonalty of Bristol and one Hugh White a plumber, whereby the latter in consideration of an annual payment of £10 per annum for life undertakes to maintain a full supply of water at the Key pipe, at the conduit by All Saints' Church, and at the conduit by St. John's Gate "Issuing from the cistern adjoining the Friers Carmelite called the cistern of St. John's Pipe." If the supply be lacking for six days he is to forfeit £10. He is, moreover, every year to make a 1,000 feet of new lead pipes, and shall lay the same so that they shall "endure forever."

There is another document with a piece of brass pipe attached showing the size of a "penne" or "feather" for supplying the water in accordance with an agreement made between the Mayor and Commonalty of Bristol and the Prior and Convent of the House of the Preaching Friars.

It appears that the Carmelite Friars on St. Augustine's Back in the thirteenth century were the owners of the spring issuing from Brandon Hill, and they granted to the parishioners of St. John's a "feather" from their pipe in Pipe Lane to conduct the water to a cistern in the Conduit House adjoining St. John's Church.

A deed dated August A.D. 1654 recites that complaints had been made respecting the scarcity of the water supply, and it was discovered that all the water had been diverted to a sugar works standing upon the site of the Great House at St. Augustine's, where formerly stood the Carmelite House. An Order was made to rectify this, and the Wardens of St. John's were directed "to enter from time to time any grounds through which pipes run and cause defects to be amended." Another deed dated 1st March, 1679, recites further disputes on the same question,

and an agreement is entered into with a piece of brass pipe attached, settling as between one Joseph Knight and the Churchwardens of St. John's that the size of the "feather" supplying the Great House shall not exceed the size of the brass pipe. Another deed of 26th March, 1744, recites that a large sum had been expended in bringing new lead pipes to the conduit.

William Worcester, when referring to the Archway, speaks of a freestone building, "Domus de frestone," on the south of the Church for supplying water by means of lead pipes. This is the first mention of the Conduit House or "Castellete," as they were called in early times, and indicates the original position of the conduit. In the time of Queen Elizabeth the Conduit House appears to have been rebuilt, and to have remained from that time forward much the same in appearance as it is represented in a sketch in Prout's *Antiquities of Bristol*, and in sketches dated 1820. In the year 1828 it was removed when the new side archway was formed. The supply pipe and tap now stand in Nelson Street, underneath the window of the Vestry. By an arrangement made in quite recent times between the Corporation of Bristol and the Vestry of St. John's the former undertook to become responsible for the repair of the pipe and the maintenance of the water supply.

## ST. AMBROSE, BRISTOL EAST.

In connection with the ancient Parish of St. John the Baptist a new Church—St. Ambrose—was founded, and the following account of the work is contributed by the Rector.

In the year 1905, when the Rev. P. A. Phelps was Rector and W. S. Clarke and C. E. D. Boutflower were Churchwardens, the Conventional District of St. Ambrose, East Bristol, was formed and affiliated to St. John the Baptist, the Rev. S. E. Swann being appointed Missioner. A Mission Church (ultimately to be used as a Parish Hall) was erected by the Vestry, and sites for Church and Vicarage were secured. Next year St. John's Almshouses were re-erected on an adjoining site, and in 1907 a smaller hall to give further accommodation for Sunday School, etc., was given by Mr. John Gardiner, a member of the Vestry. In the following year Mr. Gardiner built and gave the Clergy House. Six months after the first service in the Mission Room the congregation of St. Ambrose began a fund for building a permanent Church. The Missioner formed a building committee composed of a number of Vestrymen, together with representatives of the congregation of St. Ambrose. In January, 1908, Mr. Swann, on the death of Mr. Phelps, became Rector of St. John's. After six years of continuous effort it was possible to begin work on the Church in May, 1912. The foundation stone was laid by Mr. Gardiner, whose counsel and gifts had contributed largely to the success of the effort, on July 20th of that year, and on November 15th, 1913, the Church, complete in every respect, was consecrated by Bishop Forrest-Browne.

The total cost, including furniture, was £13,715, and the last portion was defrayed in December, 1918, the Vestry having contributed £1,800. The new Parish was legally constituted in 1915, and Mr. Swann became the first Vicar, with a licence to hold the benefice in plurality with the Rectorship of St. John.

18·11·21

36 HENLEAZE GARDENS,
WESTBURY-ON-TRYM,
BRISTOL.

Dear Mr Austin

I am much obliged
for your letter & kind comment on
my little book, & your criticism &
suggestion is amazingly new Publ[n].
I think I have contributed a little
to Crook Archaeology on the hair
1/ discovery of the actual distribution
of the Guild in the Crypt & the
name of its Founder in the very
old Lady-book
2/ further discoveries about
Muleward Tomb & the illustrations
made from a measured drawing &
new hyper illustration I think, of
the incised alabaster slab which
has an unusual amount of detail
3/ discovery of the history of the Silver gilt
plate - this was exhibited at the

Recent Church Congress at
Birmingham — & Rev. E. Aldred.
Some is writing an article
in the "Birmingham" for Dec —
on the Exhibition & will illustrate
& comment as his pencil he tells
me.

— You have given me much
kind & useful information
about / other sources of
information — they have not
the 2 books at the B. Reference Lib.
but / found a good Bodleian
in the Cage portion (5 to 20th /
Hindley & Wordsworth) &
'Bondly' ! (I have not my
note & the name on hand /.
My friend Mr. F. Green
will probably have Memoirs

Welsh — so I think I
shall not need to borrow
the Magan & Flanagan book.
If I should find it will take.
Again thanking you for
your courtesy

Yours faithfully
H. M. Hull